

****ATTENTION****

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STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

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Birds in the City and Suburbs

These birds are likely to be observed in urban residential areas of western Washington at some time during the year. This list does not include species that would be rarely observed, except for species of special interest.

COMMON NAME	URBAN STATUS	NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
Sharp-shinned Hawk	rare	Occasionally present, especially during the winter months when it feeds on small birds.
Red-tailed Hawk	rare	The most common hawk in urban areas; sometimes present soaring over fields & open spaces in search of small mammals, and are often seen in winter perched on light poles near freeways. They nest in tall trees in large greenbelts.
California Quail	uncommon	Found in wooded urban areas with remnants of coniferous forest nearby. Seed eaters. They place their eggs in a depression on the ground under brush or beside a protected rock or log. Sensitive to urban development. Call is loud and distinctive.
Great Blue Heron	rare	Sometimes present near freshwater in urban areas. They are colonial nesters, building platform nests in trees in greenbelts/parks. Sensitive to human disturbance. Classified as a species of special concern in Washington.
Band-tailed Pigeon	common	Present in urban areas with tall trees. Feeds on fruit/seeds. Nest is a loose mass of twigs placed 15-40 feet up in trees.
Rock Dove	common	Common in residential areas where the architectural style includes covered eaves which it uses for shelter and nesting; common in commercial areas. eats seeds, refuse on ground. Large numbers and roosting behavior can become a nuisance. Non-native bird, introduced from Europe in 1600's.
Western Screech Owl	uncommon	Found in wooded parks and undeveloped woodlots. Nests in tree cavities, and will nest in suitable birdhouse. Nocturnal, seldom seen. Whistled call is distinctive.
Common Nighthawk	rare summer	May nest on roofs of some downtown buildings. Feeds on flying insects and is usually seen at dusk. More common in coniferous forests where it nests on the ground amid gravel and sparse vegetation. Buzzing sound is produced as air passes over wings as it dives, and is part of courtship behavior.

COMMON NAME	URBAN STATUS	NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
Anna's Hummingbird	rare	Has recently extended its range northward from California. Probably restricted to urban areas, especially in the winter months when it relies solely on birdfeeders for food. Providing these feeders during the winter should be discouraged; it may entice the Rufous Hummingbird to remain longer than it should before migrating.
Rufous Hummingbird	common summer	Most common hummingbird in urban areas. Nest is a cup placed low in conifers and vines. Feeds on nectar and insects; can be attracted to hummingbird feeders.
Northern Flicker	common	Most common in areas with tall trees, especially during the winter months. Nests in tree cavities, sometimes in birdhouses. Eats insects (especially ants) in summer, adds seeds/fruits in winter.
Pileated Woodpecker	rare	Found in forested urban areas with undeveloped woodlots present. Nests in tree cavities in tall trees. Eats insects in summer, adds seeds/fruits in winter.
Downy Woodpecker	uncommon	Found in areas with numerous trees. Nests in tree cavities, usually 25 feet up. Eats insects.
Hairy Woodpecker	rare	Much less common than Downy Woodpecker; most common in coniferous forests. Nests in tree cavities. Eats insects.
Olive-sided Flycatcher	rare summer	Rarely present, but is more common than other flycatchers in urban areas; prefers coniferous forests. Feeds on flying insects. Nests on end of tree branch, usually 30 feet up.
Barn Swallow	common summer	Common in urban areas. Feeds on flying insects. Builds a mud cup nest on beams and ledges of buildings, bridges, and other structures.
Violet-green Swallow	common summer	Nests in old woodpecker holes, cavities under eaves, and birdhouses. Feeds on flying insects.
Purple Martin	rare summer	Formerly common, now rare, probably due to increased competition from house sparrows and starlings for reduced numbers of suitable nesting cavities. Feeds on flying insects. Cavity nester in old woodpecker holes, other natural cavities, and birdhouses.
Steller's Jay	uncommon	Found in areas with trees. Eats seeds/fruits in winter, and adds insects during the summer. Nest is a cup of sticks, leaves, & mud, usually placed up 20 feet in a conifer.
American Crow	common	Has greatly increased in numbers in urban areas since 1960. Eats seeds/fruits in winter, adds insects, eggs, and anything else in summer. Nest is a large basket of twigs 30+ feet in trees. Predator on eggs and young of other birds.
Black-capped Chickadee	common	Cavity nester, and will use birdhouses. Feeds on insects during summer, and adds fruit/seeds during winter. Fond of sunflower seeds and suet. Nest height averages 4-10 feet.

COMMON NAME	URBAN STATUS	NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	uncommon	Found in areas with numerous evergreen trees. Feeds on insects in summer, adds seeds/fruits in winter. Cavity nester, with the nest often placed below 10 feet.
Bushtit	common	Especially common in areas with abundant shrubbery and low trees. Eats insects & insect eggs. Nest is a woven gourd in a tree or shrub. Forms large feeding flocks in the winter.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	uncommon	Found in areas with numerous coniferous trees. Cavity nester; nest placed 15+ feet high. Eats insects in summer, seeds in winter. Will eat seeds and suet at birdfeeders.
Bewick's Wren	uncommon	Found in areas with numerous trees or undeveloped woodlots. Nests in existing cavities, especially in birdhouses or other man-made cavities. Eats insects.
American Robin	common	Common especially in areas with abundant vegetation during the breeding season. Nest is a cup in a shrub or tree, or on a ledge. Eats a variety of insects and fruits.
Varied Thrush	uncommon winter	Most probable in areas with numerous trees. Eats seeds/fruits. Called "Alaska Robin" by some.
Hermit Thrush	rare winter	Sometimes present in winter. Eats a variety of insect eggs, insects, and fruits/seeds. More common in coniferous forests at higher elevations during the summer. Looks for food on the ground and is therefore susceptible to cats.
Swainson's Thrush	uncommon summer	Found in areas near undeveloped woodlots. Nest is a bulky cup in a shrub or small tree below 20 feet. Eats a variety of insects, seeds, and fruits.
Golden-crowned Kinglet	uncommon	Found in areas with many coniferous trees. Nest is a cup on the limb of a conifer, especially spruce. Eats insects.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	uncommon winter	Found in areas with many trees. Eats insects and their eggs.
Cedar Waxwing	uncommon	Nest is a woven cup on a tree limb up 6-20 feet. Diet is largely fruits/seeds during both winter and summer.
European Starling	common	Common in highly urbanized areas all year; most common in urban forested areas during the breeding season. Nests in existing cavities, often displacing other native species. Eats a variety of insects, seeds, & fruits. Introduced to U.S. in 1890; reached PNW around 1950.
Yellow-rumped Warbler	uncommon - rare	Most common in urban areas as a spring migrant; also found in undeveloped greenbelt areas. Eats insects.
Wilson's Warbler	uncommon summer	Most common of all the warblers in urban areas. Nest is a compact cup on/near ground in dense shrubs. Eats insects.
House Sparrow	common	Abundant, introduced species. Nests in existing cavities; usually restricted to birdhouses or cavities in buildings. Seed-eater. Most common in highly urbanized areas.

COMMON NAME	URBAN STATUS	NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
Brown-headed Cowbird	common; rare winter	Increasing in numbers. Is a nest parasite, detrimental to other birds. Eats a variety of insects, seed, and fruits.
Evening Grosbeak	uncommon	Most common as a spring migrant and winter resident. Eats seeds/fruits in winter, insects in summer. Most commonly breeds in coniferous forest in cup nests placed high in trees. Especially fond of sunflower seeds at birdfeeders.
House Finch	common	Common where bird feeders are regularly provisioned. Seed-eater. Nest is a cup in a tree or shrub, on a building ledge, or in a birdhouse or cavity, usually below 15 feet.
Pine Siskin	common	Usually found in areas with numerous coniferous trees. Forms large flocks in winter. Eats insects in summer, seeds in winter; especially fond of thistle (niger) seeds.
American Goldfinch	uncommon	Usually found feeding on birch and alder in residential areas in winter; eats weed seeds in summer. Seed-eater all year. Nest is a cup in a tree or shrub, usually 4-14 feet up.
Red Crossbill	uncommon, erratic	Irregularly present in areas with numerous coniferous trees. Eats seeds of conifers.
Rufous-sided Towhee	uncommon	Most common in areas with numerous trees and shrubs. Nests on the ground under a low shrub, or in a low shrub. Eats seeds/fruits in winter, and adds insects in summer.
Dark-eyed Junco	common	Usually present only in winter months. Forms foraging flocks, feeding on seeds/fruits on the ground; common around birdfeeders. Flashing white outer tail feathers are conspicuous when it flies. Called "snow-bird" by some.
White-crowned Sparrow	uncommon	Seen individually in a variety of urban habitats. Feeds on seeds/fruits on the ground. Nests on or near the ground under dense shrubs, often at base of conifer.
Song Sparrow	common	Especially common in brushy vacant lots. Eats seeds in winter, adds insects in summer; feeds on the ground. Nests on the ground under a shrub, or in a low shrub or tree.